

## Abyssinian Catbird *Parophasma galinieri*

Abyssinian Catbird is a taxonomically unique species, being the only member of a genus which is endemic to Ethiopia. It is currently grouped with the babblers, and in its shape, size and behaviour is intermediate between babblers and illadopsises, but used to be considered a flycatcher.

It is not an easy species to see, tending to stick to dense tangles of vegetation in native juniper forest at altitudes of 2,425–3,000 m, where it is often found in pairs. Such areas are often confined to steep-sided gullies and rocky slopes. However, the catbird is easily detected by its melodious, far-carrying song which must make it a contender for the title of 'Most Musical Bird'. This song further confuses its

taxonomic status, as its dulcet tones are a far cry from the noisy cackling of other babblers.

## Prince Ruspoli's Turaco *Tauraco ruspolii*

It is a spot of luck that we know where Prince Ruspoli's Turaco is found for the bird remained unlocated for many years after the collector, the hapless Prince Ruspoli, was gored to death by an elephant before he could share the joys of this bird with the rest of the ornithological world! And joys indeed they are. This is surely one of Africa's most striking and beautiful turacos.

Until very recently the species was thought to be restricted to southern Ethiopia's juniper forests and to be declining as the forests were gradually

cut down, grazed and turned into open woodland.

However surveys by Luca Borgheseo in the Borana and Bale provinces of southern Ethiopia in March–April 1995 revealed that the species is much more widespread than was previously thought and was found in a number of localities where it had not previously been recorded (see Recent Reports on page 61 for further details).

Even more interesting is the fact that Luca discovered that the species is not primarily a forest species as had been previously thought, but it occurs principally in drier habitats including open woodlands. He even found it common in areas subject to human disturbance. ☺

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## Photospot: Collared Nightjar *Caprimulgus enarratus*

Hugh Chittenden

Most African nightjars Caprimulgidae are associated with savanna or open woodland habitats with Bates's Nightjar *Caprimulgus batesi* and Brown Nightjar *C. binotatus* being two species more closely associated with forest habitats. However, neither species have however been proven to breed within the forest canopy.<sup>1</sup>

Two nightjar species are found in Madagascar, the widespread and common Madagascar Nightjar *C. madagascariensis* and the rare endemic Collared Nightjar *C. enarratus*. The latter species is restricted to the undisturbed rainforests of the central-eastern and the north and north-west regions. The habitat is fast disappearing. The species

may also occasionally be found in adjacent secondary growth and in some dry deciduous forests and has recently been recorded in brush forest and mangroves in the Morondava area in western Madagascar.

In October 1994, I was lucky to be shown a roosting bird in the Reserve Speciale d'Analamazaotra/Perinet (18°28'S, 48°28'E), about 930 m above sea-level. The area has an annual average precipitation of about 1,700 mm. The bird had roosted for a number of days in the same spot, and was cautiously approached to within 3 m to obtain photographs. The forest has a high canopy and where the bird roosted the canopy was closed, with little or no

sunlight penetrating to the forest floor. The bird was well camouflaged in the leaf litter.

It is possible that the bird could have been incubating but this was not confirmed for fear of further disturbance. Collared Nightjars were subsequently seen hawking insects above the forest canopy during the evenings.

### Acknowledgements

Nigel Cleere kindly commented on the first draft of this note. ☺

### References

1. Fry, C.H., Keith, S. and Urban, E.K. (eds). 1988. *The Birds of Africa*. Vol III. London: Academic Press.

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Collared Nightjar *Caprimulgus enarratus*, Perinet, Madagascar, December 1995 (Pete Morris)  
*Engoulevent à collier Caprimulgus enarratus, Perinet, Madagascar, décembre 1995 (Pete Morris)*



Collared Nightjar *Caprimulgus enarratus*, Perinet, Madagascar,  
 October 1994 (Hugh Chittenden)  
*Engoulevent à collier Caprimulgus enarratus, Perinet,  
 Madagascar, octobre 1994 (Hugh Chittenden)*



Nahan's Francolin *Francolinus nahani*, Budongo Forest  
 Reserve, Uganda, 1995 (Andrew J Plumtre)  
*Francolin de Nahani Francolinus nahani, Forêt du Budongo,  
 Ouganda, 1995 (Andrew J Plumtre)*